

205.39 – Village Center District Regulations

A. Purpose

The purpose of the Village Center District is to protect and strengthen the traditional New England character of the Westminster Village Center, encourage sustainable and attractive site design, and promote a diverse and vibrant mix of commercial, residential, institutional, and recreational opportunities in support of the health, safety, and welfare of Westminster.

B. Applicability and Severability

The regulations within this section shall apply to those lots located in whole or part within the Village Center Zoning District. The regulations established herein shall be considered controlling wherein they should be found in conflict with other sections of this bylaw. The invalidity of any section or provision of this bylaw, or its application to any development proposal, shall not invalidate any other section, provision or application of this bylaw.

C. Special Use Regulations in VC District

(1) Upper Story Residential

Forgoing the limitations established for residential units in other sections of this Bylaw, this section shall control dimensional and density requirements for upper story residential units in the Village Center district. In order to encourage increased housing opportunities in Westminster, upper story residential uses above existing first floor commercial or institutional units may be created subject to the following limitations:

(a) Existing buildings

Upper story residential units may be created in buildings that existed at the time of the adoption of this bylaw (XX/XX/2016) provided that the following criteria are met:

- [1] The lot contains at least 7,500 square feet of area.
- [2] The provisions of Section 205.33 shall not apply to Upper Story Residential units. The parking requirement shall be one (1) parking space per unit.
- [3] Parking for any commercial uses shall be provided as established under Section 205.33. Spaces provided may be shared use spaces provided it can be demonstrated that the combination of uses do not have concurrent peak parking demands.
- [4] Any exterior alterations to provide adequate ingress or egress must be reviewed by the Planning Board as part of site plan review.
- [5] Dwelling units created must contain a minimum of 500 square feet of gross floor area.

(b) New construction

Upper story residential units may be provided as part of new construction provided that the following criteria are met:

- [1] The lot contains at least 15,000 square feet of area.
- [2] The proposed building does not contain more than 25,000 square feet of gross floor area. Dwelling units created must have a minimum of 500 square feet of gross floor area.

- [3] The provisions of Section 205.33 shall not apply to Upper Story Residential units. The parking requirement shall be one (1) parking space per unit.
- [4] Parking for any commercial uses shall be provided as established under Section 205.33. Spaces provided may be shared use spaces provided it can be demonstrated that the combination of uses do not have concurrent peak parking demands.

(2) Provisions for Multi-Use Lots

Lots may contain more than one principal use in addition to accessory uses in the Village Center District provided that all dimensional and parking requirements are met for all uses subject to the following exemptions:

- (a) Shared use parking spaces are allowed to count toward the parking requirement provided that it can be demonstrated the combination of uses do not have concurrent peak parking demands.

D. Additional Dimensional Requirements

The Planning Board may waive any additional setbacks by Special Permit provided that relief from such dimensions provides for site design that allows for additional landscaping, lighting, sidewalks, improved pedestrian or vehicular circulation, or other such amenities that provide a public benefit.

Table 205.39.1			
Dimensional Requirement	Front	Side	Rear
Maximum Building Setback ^{1,2}	20'	-	-
Minimum Parking Setback	20'	10'	-
Minimum Landscaped Buffer	5'	5'	-
Maximum Lot Coverage	80%		
Maximum Building Height for Upper Story Residential	35 feet		

- 1. Maximum building setback applies only to the principal structure on the lot; additional structures are not subject to this requirement.
- 2. Structures on lots with fifty (50) feet of frontage or less are exempted from this requirement.

E. Additional District Sign Regulations

- (1) Signs cabinets, moving signs, and other internally illuminated signs are prohibited.
- (2) No moving or animated or signs, with exception to barber pole signs.
- (3) Window and door signs shall not conceal more than 50% (fifty percent) of the total area of the windows and doors on a building façade that an individual business occupies.

F. Additional Site Plan Review Standards within the Village Center District

(1) Building Placement and Orientation

- (a) Buildings and building entrances shall be oriented to face Main Street. It is especially desirable for buildings to be oriented toward Main Street instead of parking lots.
- (b) Buildings shall be placed on the front of lots near Main Street to gradually realign the buildings in the Village Center District and encourage a cohesive and consistent streetscape.

(2) Landscaping

- (a) A minimum 5' landscaped buffer shall be maintained along the front property line between the public sidewalk and buildings to encourage a more hospitable pedestrian experience. The use of shade trees within the landscaped buffer area along the front lot line is highly encouraged.
- (b) Landscaping should consist of a combination of non-invasive plantings that are inclusive of low ground cover plantings, trees, shrubs, flowers, and grasses.
- (c) Landscaping should be designed to be attractive in all seasons.
- (d) Landscaping should be used to help define spaces, entry sequences, and pedestrian areas as well as screen parking facilities, utilities, mechanical equipment, and waste management facilities.
- (e) Landscaping should be maintained so as not to obscure vehicular or pedestrian sight lines, buildings, signage, or handicap accessibility features.

(3) Pedestrian Facilities

- (a) Sidewalks should be paved with concrete and integrated within site landscaping.
- (b) Pedestrian connections shall be constructed between building entrances, parking areas, and shall provide connectivity with other pedestrian facilities such as public sidewalks or walkways on adjacent sites where they exist.
- (c) Existing sites with insufficient pedestrian facilities, such as limited sidewalks or no separation for pedestrian and vehicular circulation, should upgrade those facilities when doing exterior building modifications or other site upgrades.

(4) Design of Parking Facilities

- (a) Parking facilities should be screened from the streetscape with landscaping. The parking facilities serving commercial, institutional, and mixed use lots with more than five contiguous spaces or more than one row of parking spaces should be bordered by landscaped buffers. The landscaped buffers should be maintained in good condition and should utilize plantings that are attractive in all seasons.
- (b) Parking should be located behind or to the side of buildings. Parking should not be located closer to the front lot line than the front façade of the principal structure on the lot.
- (c) Parking lots should be marked with striping and signage as needed to clearly identify expected vehicular circulation patterns, queuing areas, temporary and handicap parking, and other parking limitations.

(5) Building Facades and Materials

- (a) Exterior building materials inclusive of windows, siding, doors, trim, decking, and other typical materials should be selected for their consistency in appearance with the traditional New England architectural vernacular.
- (b) High quality materials should be used on building exterior. Where synthetic materials are used, they should be close in approximation and appearance to traditional materials.
- (c) Sustainable and environmentally friendly building materials should be used whenever possible.

- (d) Materials used on the front façade of a building should be carried around on all sides of the building.
 - (e) Windows in commercial structures inclusive of storefront window systems and doors shall not be obscured by opaque glass.
- (6) Massing, Window Fenestration, and Doors
- (a) Buildings should utilize irregular footprints, material transitions, changes in roof slope, varying building heights and massing, and architectural features such as columns, bays, or other projections. Avoiding monotonous building facades or the appearance of out of scale buildings through architectural features is strongly encouraged.
 - (b) Buildings on corner lots should be oriented to face both streets and utilize high quality materials on both facades.
 - (c) Flat roofs are generally discouraged unless deemed otherwise appropriate by the Planning Board. Where flat roofs are constructed, they should be adorned with a decorative parapet wall or cornice to provide screening for rooftop equipment and maintain a consistent appearance with the traditional New England architectural vernacular.
 - (d) Roofs with gables, dormers, cupolas, chimneys, or other design features are encouraged.
 - (e) Building facades should have an appropriate and proportionate number of windows and doors. Windows should be selected for their consistency with the style of the building. Where windows are replaced in historic structures, the glazing of the replacement windows should be consistent with that of the original windows.
- (7) Utilities and Mechanicals
- (a) Open storage areas, service areas, loading facilities, and utility buildings should be screened from the view of neighboring properties, the street, and other structures using landscaping, fencing, or other appropriate methods.
 - (b) Garbage dumpsters shall be enclosed by opaque fencing which shall be kept closed except when being serviced and landscaping.
- (8) Signs and Illumination
- (a) Signs and banners should be constructed of substantial materials.
 - (b) Second story signage should be discouraged.
 - (c) Illumination for signs should be provided by provided lamps which cast light downward.
 - (d) Lighting for signage or parking should not be cast onto neighboring properties. The use of shields and other mechanisms to prevent light pollution and nuisance should be utilized to the extent necessary.
 - (e) The installation of pedestrian scale lamps adjacent to pedestrian areas is encouraged. Lamps should be selected for their consistency with the character of the Village Center and should be cited appropriately to avoid visual clutter. Tall lamp posts should not be used adjacent to building, but are acceptable in the interior of large parking areas.